



HMA Alliance

Carol McNamee, Co-founder of MADD-Hawaii

A Decade of Difference—MADD in Hawaii

This year, Hawaii MADD—Mothers Against Drunk Driving—commemorates its 10th anniversary and looks back on a decade of effort to change attitudes and behavior about the acceptability of drinking and driving. The Honolulu, Maui, and Hawaii County Chapters of MADD—numbers 200 to 202 in the nation—officially began on February 12, 1984. A Kauai chapter was chartered several years later. The first seeds of change in Hawaii's views about impaired driving actually were planted two years earlier when a Hilo psychiatrist, Dr Michael Irwin, testified before the Hawaii legislature.

Dr Irwin's wife, Sherry, was killed by a drunk driver in 1981; he and his two-year-old son were critically injured. Lawmakers responded to Mike Irwin's compelling 1982 testimony by strengthening the state's basic DUI law.

Later in 1982, Dr Irwin and State Representative Richard Matsuura spoke to members of the Hawaii Medical Association Auxiliary at a meeting in Hilo. The eventual result of that presentation was the Auxiliary's adoption of the campaign against drunk driving as a project. In 1983, Auxiliary members answered phone calls from the public when a movie about MADD's founder, Candy Lightner, was shown on NBC-TV. Bolstered by an outpouring of citizen concern (nearly 600 calls), Auxiliary leaders decided to start MADD.

The organizing committee, chaired by Carol McNamee, the 1982 to 1983 HMA Auxiliary president, included about 20 people who had called about the MADD movie. During the organizing process, the group decided to combine the official chartering of MADD with a conference on drunk driving. Candy Lightner, the national founder of MADD, was invited to be the keynote speaker. Lightner had become a national heroine by almost single-handedly raising public consciousness about drinking and driving. It was Lightner who said, "Drunk driving is a socially acceptable form of homicide."

On February 12, 1984, the conference "Drunk Driving: Everyone's Problem" was held as a joint project of the MADD

Organizing Committee and the HMA Auxiliary. In addition to the daylong conference, a legislative breakfast, a Neighbor Island speaking tour, a one hour live appearance on the Perry and Price show on KSSK radio, and excellent media coverage, launched MADD in Hawaii. Carol McNamee (Philip McNamee MD) became the president of the Honolulu County Chapter; Leanna Stodd (Russell Stodd MD) led the Maui County Chapter; and Betty Ghosh (Manas Ghosh MD) became president of the Hawaii County Chapter. None of these three women could have predicted the extent of the commitment they had made on that day in 1984.

Once chartered, the Hawaii chapters of MADD lost no time in working toward their goals. Court monitoring became an important program; legislative advocacy began with the establishment of a DUI Consortium, which included representatives from about 10 agencies who discussed and supported legislative measures; annual candlelight vigils were held in memory of victims of highway crashes; the Jon K. Raneses Memorial Library was created to house impaired driver and victim support resources; youth programs were established; and public awareness projects were launched, the most visible being the annual Project Red Ribbon campaign.

Income to support MADD's programs has been generated through fund-raising events, memberships, the generosity of the corporate community, and grants—including a federal VOCA—Victims of Crime Act—grant which, since 1990, has partially supported the victim assistance portion of the organization.

Since 1986, the Honolulu Chapter has sponsored an annual holiday season MADD DASH fun run which now attracts more than 1,000 participants, provides awareness and education, and raises nearly \$25,000 for MADD's programs. The 1994 MADD DASH will be held on Sunday, November 20 at 7:30 am starting in front of the downtown library at King and Punchbowl Streets. Members of the Honolulu County Medical Society will receive an entry form in the monthly HCMS *Bulletin*. Entry forms also can be obtained at running stores, 7-Eleven stores, and Gas Express stations. A MADD DASH has been held once in each Neighbor Island county—Maui in 1992, Kauai and Hawaii in 1993.

Alcohol-related highway fatalities have decreased from 100 in 1982—just before MADD was organized—to 66 in 1992, a decline of 34%. The decline in fatalities has not been a straight line. When there is a rise—as there was in 1993, MADD knows

it must redouble its efforts to reverse the trend. For ten years these efforts have included help from the Hawaii Medical Association and its Auxiliary—now Alliance.

The Hawaii MADD organization extends its sincerest appreciation and a large MADD *mahalo* for the continuing support of the medical community. Unfortunately, these efforts must continue—highway crashes remain the number one killer of Americans from ages 5 to 32. Two out of every five Americans will be involved in an alcohol-related crash in their lifetimes.

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